THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) and (b) As per Carriage by Air Act, 1972, in such cases, the compensation is paid by the respective airlines. In the instant case also, the compensation was actually paid by the Saudi Airlines and Kazak Airways.

(c) The matter was investigated by a Court of Inquiry which found that the cause of the collision was the unauthorised descending by the Kazak aircraft to Flight Level 140 and failure to maintain the assigned Flight Level.

(d) to (f) Since the compensation was paid by the respective airlines and not by the Government of India, the question of any recovery from the airlines does not arise.

Promotion of foreign trade

3656. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state the details of steps taken by Government to promote the Indo-Russia, Indo-Pak, Indo-US, Indo-China trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): The Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between India and Russian Federation signed on May 4, 1992, provides the basic framework for Indo-Russian trade and economic cooperation. The utilisation of the Russian rupee debt fund is governed by the Arrangement between the Bank For Foreign Economic Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Reserve Bank of India for implementing the provisions agreed between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of India. As per this arrangement, the funds related to the payment of Russian rupee debt are to be utilized for purchase of goods and services from India. India's exports to Russia are moving largely on debt repayment track as well as in a small measure, under hard currency.

A Joint Document on Development of Trade, Economic, Industrial, Financial, Scientific and Technological Co-operation was signed with the Russian Federation during the visit of Prime Minister of Russian Federation to India in December, 1998. The Joint Document seeks to enlarge and deepen cooperation between the two countries in various spheres.

Recognising the potential that exists for greater cooperation in various fields and taking into account new opportunities emerging from the processes of economic change in both the countries and wishing to further strengthen and develop economic cooperation and trade ties, the Government of India and the Government of the Russian Federation have taken various steps which include promotion of dialogue at the highest level, constant review through the Joint Commission/Working Group/Sub-Group mechanism, promoting direct business contacts through exchange of delegations, Joint Business Councils, holding of exhibitions, participation in fairs etc.

As a WTO signatory, India has granted Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to Pakistan although Pakistan has not reciprocated the gesture. Various other steps taken to promote the Indo-Pak trade include exchange of information, exchange of delegations, participation in fairs and exhibitions, buyer-seller meets etc.

It is the endeavour of the Government to further boost export to USA through a medium term export strategy, which strives to exploit the untapped potential in bilateral trade which focus on special efforts towards developing new and fast areas of co-operation, close monitoring of, as well as liaison with US authorities on important bilateral trade related issues.

To further buttress these efforts, the two sides have agreed to set up India-US Commercial Dialogue, which was signed on 23.03.2000. The framework aims to (a) facilitate trade (b) maximize investment opportunities across a broad range of economic sectors, including information technology, infrastructure, biotechnology and service.

Discussion with US authorities on various trade issues were held as a follow-up action on the Indo-US Commercial Dialogue. The Government is working closely with Export Promotion Councils and other apex organisations to promote exports to the USA.

The various steps taken towards the improvement and expansion of trade with China include holding of meetings of the Joint Economic Group, exchange of delegations, holding of Joint Business Councils Meetings, exchange of commercial information, participation in fairs and exhibitions etc.

Removal of restrictions on exports

3657. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a proposal to lift restrictions on export of certain items;

(b) if so, the details of those items; and

(c) by when Government would lift the restrictions on them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) to (c) Restrictions on export of Agricultural items were recently lifted except onion, niger seeds and a few other minor items. Restrictions on exports exist essentially due to security, environment concerns as well as international treaty obligations. The present list of export restrictions has been furnished to the Parliament Library in the publication; "ITC(HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items, 1st April, 2002—31st March, 2007".